United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GCSS.III/2/Add.2
30 December 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL
Third special session
Nairobi, 3-5 February 1992
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT (1972-1992): SAVING OUR PLANET – CHALLENGES AND HOPES

Report of the Executive Director

Addendum

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

Following its consideration of the report on the state of the environment (1972-1992), the Governing Council may wish to consider adopting a decision along the following lines:

The Governing Council

1. *Notes (with appreciation)* the report of the Executive Director on the state of the environment (1972-1992) (UNEP/GCSS.III/2 and Add.1);

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the deteriorating state of the environment in many areas and, in particular:

(a) The continuing land degradation and desertification in drylands, affecting about 75 per cent of the total area of rangelands, more than 45 per cent of the total area of rainfed croplands and nearly 30 per cent of irrigated croplands;

(b) The continuing destruction of forests all over the globe, with the total loss amounting to more than 17 million hectares per year;

(c) The continuing increase in air pollution in urban areas, especially in developing countries;

(d) The continuing deterioration of the state of coastal areas and their marine resources;

(e) The shortage and deterioration of the quality of freshwater resources;

(f) The tremendous assault on biological resources;

(g) The expansion of the production and use of toxic chemicals and the generation of hazardous wastes;

(h) The continuing alarming depletion of stratospheric ozone;

(i) The increasing evidence that the world is facing the daunting problem of climate change and global warming;

3. *Notes* that:

(a) Most of the environmental problems identified at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment are still present and that other problems have emerged during the past twenty years;

(b) The solutions to a large number of these problems are known, have been successfully applied, and can be implemented on a much larger scale provided that there are:

(i) Sufficient additional financial resources;

(ii) Proper mechanisms for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies;

(iii) Sufficient political will to cooperate on the basis of global partnership, not aid;

(iv) Serious efforts to ensure better and greater monitoring of the state of the environment, especially in developing countries, better harmonization of environmental data, better flow of data and information on the environment, and more intensive and concerted research to fill the gaps in knowledge as soon as possible;

(c) All the deterioration of the environment and its natural resources is caused by underdevelopment and poverty and wrong patterns of development and lifestyles;

(d) There is still a complete lack of interest in developing economic tools that put proper values on environmental goods and services and in including environmental and natural resources accounts in national accounts;

4. *Invites* Governments participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to commit themselves to concrete programmes of action designed to redress the damage and lack of action referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the present decision;

5. *Further invites* the Governments participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to review the examples of proposed targets set forth in the annex to the present decision* as possible actions that they commit themselves to taking;

6. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to bring the present decision to the attention of the Conference through its Preparatory Committee at its fourth session;

7. *Invites* the Executive Director:

(a) To report on the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council at its seventeenth regular session;

(b) To ensure the widest possible dissemination of his state-of-the-environment report.

---

* *Or some of them selected by the Governing Council*

Annex

TARGETS FOR ACTION ON THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A. *Regulatory measures*

1. *By 1995*

(a) A global agreement on reforestation targets for each decade of the 21st century in each of the world's eco-regions;

(b) A global plan to combat marine pollution from land-based sources, with a target to reduce by the year 2000 marine pollution from such sources to the 1990 level, and an agreed programme for further reductions after 2000;

(c) An international agreement to ban all exports of hazardous wastes to developing countries, and a timetable to reduce the generation of such wastes;

(d) A global convention for the exchange of information on chemicals in international trade and establishment of an intergovernmental mechanism for chemical risk assessment and management;

(e) A global convention on the prevention, notification and mutual cooperation in mitigating the effects of major environmental emergencies;

(f) An international code of conduct to apply internationally agreed guidelines for the transfer of technology, particularly to developing countries;

(g) An international agreement on guidelines for the application of environmental impact assessment, especially with regard to human activities with potential transboundary effects;

(h) The establishment of an international non-governmental body to help in monitoring breaches of environmental treaties and national actions leading or likely to lead to major environmental deterioration.

2. *By 2000*

Agreement on the means of ensuring compliance with environmental treaties and establishment of appropriate institutional mechanisms to verify their implementation.

B. *Assessment*

1. *By 1995*

Assessment of the environmental impacts of known new and alternative sources of energy.

2. *By 2000*

Completion of:

(a) A comprehensive assessment of air quality in all urban areas;

(b) A comprehensive assessment of global freshwater resources and their quality;

(c) A comprehensive assessment of land and soil degradation in the world;

(d) An environmental impact assessment of existing new technologies;

(e) An environmental impact assessment of existing new materials.

3. *By 2010*

Completion of a survey of the world's habitats known to be unique, rich in biodiversity, or at risk.

C. *Environmental management*

1. *By 1995*

(a) Approval of three concrete 5-year programmes to combat land degradation in drylands (desertification), which have been costed and for which sources of funding have been identified;

(b) Establishment of a United Nations centre for response to environmental emergencies.

2. *By 2000*

(a) Achievement of a 30-per cent reduction in the amount of hazardous waste generated, compared with the 1990 level;

(b) Adoption by major development financing institutions of policies and procedures that ensure that their financial support to activities does not lead to environmental deterioration;

(c) All countries to adopt environmental and natural resource accounting as part of their system of national accounts;

(d) Capital flows in the form of natural resource imports and exports to be included in international trade statistics;

(e) All countries with real GDP per capita above $5,000 to produce a plan to reduce their consumption of non-renewable natural resources;

(f) All countries with per capita annual energy consumption over 80 gigajoules to stabilize consumption at 1992 rates and establish programmes to reduce energy use to the 80 gigajoule level.

3. *By 2000-2010*

An end to net global deforestation.

D. *Environment and economics*

By 1995

(a) Production of estimates of the global costs of failing to deal with climate change, ozone layer depletion, loss of biodiversity, marine and coastal deterioration from land-based sources of pollution, and continued production of hazardous wastes;

(b) Production of revised estimates of the additional resources needed for the transfer of knowledge, information and specific environmentally sound technologies to developing countries and countries in transition, to allow them to participate meaningfully in dealing with their national as well as global environmental problems. By the same time, agreement should have been reached on sources of funding and mechanisms for the transfer of technologies.